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## CURRENT OPINION

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### Religion and Social Control

That religion still has power to reinforce and stabilize the progressive civilization of our modern world is the faith of Professor Charles A. Ellwood. It must be a religion, however, that is humanitarian and capable of being the basis of social control for the highest form of culture. His plea for a reformation of religion to meet this need is presented in the *Scientific Monthly* for November. He points out that when the religious sanction for the mores crumbles the mores lose their vital hold upon the individual and the civilization crumbles. The reason for this intimate connection lies in the nature of religion as a social thing. Religion is man's valuating attitude toward the unknown powers which are behind the phenomena of the universe and the desire to come into right relations with them. The projecting of social and personal values into the universe universalizes and makes absolute those values. The great value of religion is that it gives hope and confidence; that it releases the energies of man in times of stress, braces vital feeling, and helps him to face the issues of life and death with faith in himself and in his world. This has great social significance. Religion has always been a powerful means of social control for the ever-enlarging good of the group life. The social values of the group are fixed by the religious sanction and transmitted from generation to generation. Social obligations become religious obligations. In this way religion becomes the chief means of conserving customs and habits which have been found to add to the safety and welfare of the group. There is no inherent reason why social values which religion reinforces should be non-progressive. A survey of the progress of religion from pre-animism through animism, totemism, ancestor-worship, polytheism, henotheism

to monotheism shows a development toward social idealism and humanitarianism. It is a sketch of the development of the mental and social life of man. The question now is vital: Will the next step in the development mean atheism? When we reach the ethical plane of social religion is it necessary that social values should be expressed religiously? Why is not the fact that they are social values built up from the real experiences of mankind sufficient sanction for them without attaching to them theological or mythological notions? The question overlooks the fact that religion remains even though theologies may change ceaselessly. The modern world must recognize that religion is a thing which exists independently of definite theological doctrines. Religion of some kind we shall have. The problem of today is to secure a religion adapted to the requirements of our present, infinitely complex, social life. Never before in human history did rational social values stand more in need of religious sanction. If the world is to be secure we must have a rebirth of humanitarian ethics to obviate the welter of endless class, national, and racial struggles. This will demand sacrifice from the individual and hence greater social control. Humanitarian ethics can be successful only if it is supported by religion which will stimulate a humanity-wide altruism in the individual. It must have the support of such a religion of humanity. Individual, class, tribal, and national ethics are to be replaced by social, international, humanitarian ethics. This will be the social meaning of the new humanitarian religion which will put its emphasis on love and service to mankind. The advanced religions of today have even now taken the stand for humanitarian ethics. If the churches would drop theological disputes and forget their traditional dif-

ferences they would enter upon the great and splendid field of human service and rally to their support a very large part of those who are now their active opponents. Let the recognized basis of fellowship be consecration for the service of mankind and the irrational, unsocial, and unprogressive elements in our religious life would disappear. "An actually realized humanitarian religion, sanctioning and reinforcing humanitarian ethics, would be our surest guaranty of establishing social justice and future good-will between classes, nations, and races and the surest preventative of the recurrence of such a calamity as the present war."

### **The Post-War Mind**

Enthusiasts will consider the article in the *New Republic* of December 7 under the foregoing title as decidedly pessimistic. Professor John Dewey writes with cold, scientific sanity regarding the future. He warns the prophets of a "new era" that one cannot be a safe prophet by projecting the psychology characteristic of war time into the days of peace. The entire reactions from war are contrary to those which occur to war. The states of mind which were suppressed by war and inhibited may come to the fore again when the inhibition is lifted with such power as to be the dominant factors. "A fair way to estimate the post-war psychology is to take the spontaneous emotional predictions called out by the pressure of war and reverse them."

Seriousness, determination, and constant preoccupation with the future mark the human response in war. The entire attitude is favorable to consideration of coming change. Predictions of readjustment and sweeping changes flourish, but when war is over it is not the arduous task of readjustment but the enjoyment of the present, of gains to be snatched from using opportunities of pleasure and profit in things as they are, which holds the mind. During

war the future is full of hope. Every great war is to usher in a time of enduring peace, to see the establishment of justice, the dawn of a new era. "Millennial expectations are not born in times of prosperity." They are born in evil and distress as compensatory consolation. But when peace comes and easy satisfactions are at hand the dream of social reconstruction is forgotten. "It will be all too easy to go on cultivating our plots on the verge of Vesuvius till a new catastrophe overtakes us."

War is the creator of an exaltation of mind welcomed by some as a religious conversion. This abnormal mental strain and tension, however, gives way to extreme frivolity and reckless pleasure-seeking when the tension is removed. It is likely that the excessive sexual excitation will have more abiding consequences than the much-heralded spiritual uplift which moralists applaud.

To the superficial observer it looked as though a great wave of human brotherhood had swept over the earth and men were being bound together as "common servants and common sufferers in the same cause." It would be to build upon the most sandy of foundations if this sentimental outburst were counted upon in the treatment of post-war problems. The old oppositions will return and may be the more intense because of the stirrings of hate and suspicion bred by war. If our expectation of a happier future is based upon projecting into the future the conscious states characteristic of war it is already doomed. However, an analysis of human nature is valuable, for it gives aid in actually planning the future. We may not trust the emotions to do a work which only the most laborious and faithful intelligence can achieve. In our national readjustment we must not trust to vague aspiration and the protective hopefulness produced in war time. Such an analysis "will teach us that reliance upon such undisciplined desires is

one of the chief reasons why the course of events has in the past frustrated the ardent hopes of men in the great crises of human history. It will suggest dependence upon the homelier and less exciting work of an intelligence which resolves problems into their detailed elements and which contrives piecemeal and patiently for their solution."

### **The Church and World-Peace**

George E. O'Dell writes in the *Standard* for December on "Hyphenated Religion and the World War." Christianity seems to him to be all done up in labels. It would be unseemly for any Christian body to call itself just "Christian." The labels of denominations are not signs of tolerance merely; under the label there is the lurking assurance that the label is a sign of superiority. There is here a subtle, spiritual pride. The fact that the denominations do not war violently upon each other makes it possible for each to continue, unchallenged, in estimating itself better than its neighbors. This made it possible for the church world to acquiesce in the existence of national consciousnesses and national rivalries and pride on the model of what had been so tolerantly accepted in the religious world. Another important fact is that if we are to have a true world-peace we must cultivate a genuine democracy within the realm of spiritual beliefs and valuations. The movement toward so-called Christian unity is a means to this end.

But the movement toward unity has been on a false track. It has sought to succeed by the method of exclusion. Unity can never be accomplished in this way except at the cost of any real religion. The way of success is to include the differences of all the sects and see what there is of value in them and reinterpret them in human and ethical terms. The whole trend toward Christian unity itself emphasizes the fact that its tendency is to discard the obviously supernatural. Human needs have been met

by the sects and an appreciation of Jesus in terms of immanence and humanness will keep close to the heart of humanity, will lead inevitably to an appreciation of other world-religions, and lay the basis for international brotherliness and peace.

### **The Problem of Evil**

Following his article on the theological problem of evil, "Why Does God Permit Evil When He Has Power to Prevent It?" Professor Dickinson S. Miller presents in the *Anglican Theological Review* for October the anthropological problem of evil: Why does man permit evil when he has power to prevent it? His answer is: Because it has never really occurred to him that he ought.

Evil is not sin alone but every wretchedness and pain which destroys the well-being of mankind. Morality has for its real meaning and object the termination of misery. That is why we call certain acts sinful; but that we should begin to call other acts sinful, that morality is a failure so far as it does not stop misery and secure human weal, has not really come home to human consciousness. Man permits evil because it has never really occurred to him that God wished him to stop it by every means in his power. Evil is not an abstract thing. "There is no evil but evils and their source, no sin but particular sins, no misery but a grief here, a bitterness of disappointment there, a grinding pain, a dull ache, a weight of dismalness and depression, 'strained relations,' a life poisoned by a poisoned body, a life mutilated by extreme poverty, discreditable failure, tragedies—all for the most part so easily averted!" And misery that might be prevented is sin. Morality must become conscious of its object and give the best brain and power available to the task of achieving that object. Not only in international relationships are these evils causing misery that might be abolished but such evil is seen in more homely forms—in sending a boy or girl to the wrong

school to be warped for life; in failure to form habits of work in youth; in overeating and neglect of exercise; in thinking ill of another on *ex parte* evidence, and all the multitude of things which make the way of life difficult for ourselves and for others.

Human morality has one purpose—to prevent misery and secure well-being. But morality forgets its own purpose. Rules become sacred, to be obeyed without question. The result is that man is vividly aware of an “ought” but it means to him only a routine of familiar duties. “He has no clue by which he could add to them or execute them with an eye to compassing their aim of happiness for all affected. He has a set of duties; he has no principle of duty.” The human conscience has become blind under the authority of duty but to find the solution of modern problems of evil it must *see*. Christ showed man that morality is humane, based on love, and having human weal as its object. True morality is a morality of results. It asks: What will be the fruit of this act? And intelligence is valuable chiefly because it is the means by which we are able to obtain the results we desire. Evil has been permitted because man has not realized that he ought to use his powers in eliminating it. It has never really occurred to him that he should learn how to contend with it. Religion commands that we awake and face the duty of controlling events so that they make for the happiness of mankind and of cultivating those practical virtues by which alone we can control them. God does not tolerate evil; he works with us for the vanquishing of all the evil of the world.

### **The Conception of a Finite God**

The hopelessness of solving the traditional difficulties which confront thought in dealing with the infinity of God comes out clearly in the article under the foregoing title in the *Expositor* for November from the pen of Professor H. R. Mackintosh,

of Edinburgh. He concedes to the finitists that they are dealing with the real crux of apologetics but claims that Christianity has never asserted that God was equal to the whole of things, or the “Absolute,” or had nothing outside of him, or was not apart from his worshipers, or not separate from human sin. No theologian ever claimed that God could do anything that might be stated. He was always logically limited. Omnipotence can be accepted only as it is ethical. But religious faith and the faith of Jesus must hold to a power in God that is not only sufficient, not only great enough for our needs, but which is “commensurate with the possibilities of all created being.”

Modern thought is also insisting upon a growing God. This means, of course, that God will never be perfect. Professor Mackintosh agrees that the dynamic is better than the static view of God. The living God of faith is a God possessed of will and expressing that will in action. He is not unrelated to the changes in his world; hence we may not speak of him as entirely unchangeable. God is the God of history—the history of the race, of nations, of individuals. But a growing God who is placed in time as we are in time, who must be ignorant of the future, would mean the complete destruction of Christian faith in providence. A logical application of the doctrine would also teach that God is more holy and more loving now than formerly. Even those who argue for the finite God want him to be reliable, or in other words “unchangeably helpful.”

The spiritual man does feel sympathetic to the idea of a God who is with him in the hard experiences of life, who shares them; but he also, with equal necessity, eternalizes the divine life, denying the quality of progress to the character of God. This seems to end in contradiction—God in history yet above history. Faith must hold to the thought of a God who has a positive relation to history with the result that he must

be affected and developed in his moral being. But the living God says, "I, the Lord, change not." How these two attributes can hold good at once must remain an insoluble problem.

### **The Ethics of Immortal Reward**

The question of human immortality has been forced to the front by the war and most extravagantly dogmatic statements are being made. A quiet treatment of the "moral argument" by Professor John Laird appears in the last issue of the *Hibbert Journal*. He points out that the old speculative arguments of the Middle Ages no longer attract attention. We do not deal now in "simple substances." The moral argument moreover is not proof, but inspires conviction in many because it appeals to more than mere sentiment and because it supports the doctrine of personal immortality. The moral ends of a moral universe require the existence of responsible moral agents but of course this does not imply the *same* moral beings nor human moral beings. Still further, if the world of organic life must ultimately cease on the planet, what guaranty is there of the stability of the moral universe?

One form of the moral argument may be set aside at once, since it raises more problems than it solves. To argue that anything which has the capacities of a moral being should in equity have full scope to exercise those capacities seems legitimate, but what of the inequalities of capacity; are the capacities of some thwarted, or are the weaklings necessary to the moral universe? The other form links up with the theory of rewards and punishment. This theory is based on the need of securing society or the demand of satisfaction for righteous anger. As a matter of fact, however, there is only one principle that justifies punishment and that is "the great moral principle that it is always right to do evil if that is the only way by which greater good may arise."

The question of hell as punishment is repugnant to the common man because the punishment seems disproportionate to the offense and leads to no good end. What then of Heaven as reward? The same argument holds on the first point. Moreover the argument that another world is needed to redress the balance of this logically leads to the statement that the man who has received less than the measure of happiness his virtue deserves ought to receive in the next life more than his due share and if the balance has been equal in this life there is no claim to immortality at all.

The connection between moral virtue and happiness is not intrinsic, and consequently the moral argument based on the idea of rewards and punishment falls to the ground. Yet we still believe that happiness is good and pain is bad. The more happiness there is, and the less pain, the better the universe would be. The universe is not an ideal place but may be improved. It would be better if all were just. It would be better if no one were miserable. But if the just are immortal so are the unjust. There are no reasons to believe that the moral ends of the universe are not strong and stable enough to dispense with reward and punishment and it is better to think that they are.

### **By-Products of the War**

The world-tragedy is not all loss. In addition to the main issue of gaining victory for moral idealism over brute force, Professor George A. Wilson sees many valuable by-products accruing to America from the war. His address is printed in the *Chinese Student's Monthly* for December. These gains fall under three groups—economic, social, and religious. In the economic realm there is a movement toward greater economic justice. Socially, the war has stimulated the spirit of human brotherhood. This is true not only of the relations among

our own ethnic groups but of international relations as well. We feel larger sympathy now for the negro, for the "sweated" worker of the slums, and America is no longer national but interested in the "foreign," depressed peoples of Europe. Negro and Chinaman and Hindu have won a place by right on the fields of France. The Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A. are the visible embodiments of this new spirit of sympathy among men. Before the war social reform was slow and difficult; now there is an intense interest in all ideals for social betterment, especially such reforms as the control of the liquor traffic, the proper treatment of criminals and defectives, the better exercise of philanthropy, the more adequate protection and education of children for citizenship. We seem at last to be approaching the ethical maturity of our social life.

The religious awakening has been the most inspiring of all. America had been materialistic and utilitarian. It seemed to pass during the early years of the war through a period of questioning when the idea of God faded before the horror of world-diabolism. But at length idealism won. God, providence, death, future life, duty, began to take meaning anew. But not the old meaning. The unessentials were cast aside; only the great ethical issues command interest. Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, Confucian and Buddhist, are united to free the world from a devastating scourge. If Christianity shall take its place as the great world-religion of the future it will only be by the pre-eminence of its moral ideals. Every department of our life feels the revival. It must surely mean cleaner politics, better economic laws, juster treatment of defectives; in a word, a more wholesome national life.

It may be that a new civilization will arise out of the ruins of the old, "a new and more glorious civilization in which the ruling ideals of life will be practical love of

God, and in which human brotherhood will express itself in ever-new ways of service and good-will, in which all forms and institutions will become so transformed and adjusted as to give every man the full measure of reward for his labor, in which poverty and its twin brother crime will be practically done away, and the ideal of the Kingdom of God will be realized among men."

### Popular Religion in England

There has been a reversal of opinion in England concerning the effect of the war upon the religious life. At first enthusiastic chaplains told of the return of the men of the New Army to the faith of traditional Christianity. After four years of war most observers agree that neither the army nor civilian life has been appreciably affected religiously by the struggle. Rev. Cyril Hudson, writing in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for November, thinks both judgments are superficial. It is true that the churches are no fuller, true that outward and visible signs of real spiritual revival are lacking. It is also true that the war has been waged by the government without noticeable reference to the will of God. Yet England has really been moved. The religious effect of the war is to be seen in two main features: (1) a decreasing indifference to religion in general, and (2) a growing inclination to those types of religion which seem to guarantee quick and easily verifiable results with the least expenditure of effort. Christian Science and Spiritualism meet this last test and so have advanced rapidly during the last four years. They produce results. They may not be Christian, they may not be scientific, but in hundreds of cases they *work*.

The future of the church must depend upon its determination "to aim at truth at any cost and in every department of religion." The masses are alienated from the church, but the reason is that the man on the street believes the church to hold ideas

regarding God, sin, and the sacraments which are utterly detestable to the modern mind. If he could be shown that God is an ever-present and all-loving Father, that sin is an offense, not against law but against love, he might be more interested and more religious. If Christianity were what the masses generally believe it to be even the bishops themselves would cease to be interested in it.

### **The Vatican and the War**

The most unhappy man in the world today is the Pope, according to the estimation of a correspondent of the *New Europe*. His political universe is tottering. Despotisms are crashing to destruction in the struggle with freedom, and with the victory of the Allies despotisms must disappear. Yet the Pope is bound by a body of political teaching which makes the Papacy the most absolute and rigid of the surviving mediaeval despotisms. Once it was almost the political overlord of the world. At the Reformation it tempered its arrogance to gain the help of secular despotisms in the counter-Reformation. Now the Papacy has lost its temporal possessions but it has renounced none of its claims. It is not only itself a mediaeval despotism but it professes to teach authoritatively the principles that must govern the social structure of states. It is the social theory of the Middle Ages. It still claims the right to depose kings and governments, to free peoples from their political allegiance, and to set bounds to the power of every secular government. The syllabus of Pope Pius IX anathematizes the very principles of liberty and freedom on which every allied state rests and for which the Allies are fighting. According to the theory of the Papacy the republics of America and France and the state of modern Italy exist and are tolerated only because the Pope has not the political power to destroy them. While these claims sound preposterous and are

rejected by the majority of Catholic laymen they are taught in every Catholic seminary, are the creed of the church, and were the principles which determined the attitude of the Papacy during the war.

The Vatican saw in the war a chance to impose once more the political teaching of Rome upon an unwilling world. The existing despotisms, allied with the Papacy, would be strengthened; the temporal power of the Pope would be restored; France would be punished and the monarchy and church reconstituted. While being thus violently partisan, it was necessary for the Vatican to retain the spiritual allegiance of the Catholics of the allied countries and so the Papal See attempted the difficult feat of neutrality. But the Pope failed in neutrality. He used his spiritual influence to gain his political ends. He tried to keep Italy out of the war and when she was in did his utmost to get her out. He tried to keep America out of the struggle. He tried to weaken the British Empire by the work of the Catholic bishops in Ireland, Quebec, and Australia. He made peace proposals which would have brought about a German peace. All the actions of the Papacy in connection with the war helped the Central Powers. This is a neutrality difficult to explain.

It is strange that the German, Austrian, Turk, and Bulgar should be the allies of a great spiritual church. Yet it is a natural alliance of despotisms. The Central Powers fought for the continuance of despotism; the Allied Powers fought for freedom and free institutions. The Pope now finds himself the only despot remaining, faced by a democratic world which has arisen in spite of his laws, his intrigue, and his anathemas. The Pope in the past was able to fall back upon fellow-despots and to brand as irreligious those who fought for right, justice, and freedom. Two courses are open to him in the future—either to be a Pope without a flock or to become the demo-



cratic head of a great spiritual church. If he chose the latter course he would have the sympathy of the whole world. But it can only be done by a complete change in the political orientation of the Papacy, by tearing up the political decrees of every pope for the last twelve centuries. If Innocent III were in the papal chair it might even now be done.

#### **The European Opportunity for the Anglican Church**

In the *New Europe* for September 26, Canon W. H. Carnegie summons his fellow Anglo-Saxon religionists to welcome the unique responsibility placed upon the church of England for helping the Slavic orthodoxy reach a stable and fruitful future. The Anglican church has always felt drawn toward the Russian Orthodox church. Now the Serbian religious leaders have asked the Anglican church to undertake the task of training in the English seminaries the candidates for the priesthood of the Serbian Orthodox church. Forty of these students are now at Oxford and at Cuddesdon Theological College under instruction. Canon Carnegie feels that the future of the world depends upon an alliance between the Anglo-Saxon and the Slav. But to be solid the alliance must not be merely a political and commercial agreement. It can last only as there is spiritual affinity and religious sympathy and understanding between the races. In the present *débâcle* in Russia the only power that is standing as an unbroken unit is the great church of orthodoxy. It is being kindled into new life. The link between the two made possible by the request of the Serbian authorities gives to

the Anglican church the opportunity of sending into influential leadership men who have a cordial understanding of the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon countries and who will have linked themselves with their English friends in such a way as to be a real spiritual bond between the races.

#### **The New Germany**

The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* summarizes the reasons for the world's determination to subdue Germany as (1) the invasion of Belgium, (2) the U-boat warfare, (3) the peace of Brest-Litovsk. The *New Europe* reproduces a passionate repudiation by the better soul of Germany of the military masters who duped the German people into their present place of shame and ignominy. "The German people are learning today the great lesson of terrible experience. They are shaking off the rule of those unhappy people who have lured them to disaster. They are getting rid of the delusive ideals of imperialistic aspirations after domination. They are beginning to take their destiny in their own hands. They will thus build another Germany, a Germany which will be perhaps a few square miles smaller than the old, which will not rule any longer over Poles as well as Germans, but which will be free from junkers and barons, free from militarism and capitalism—that Germany which in an hour of deepest degradation has seen the great vision; a Germany free and established on the equality of all people! The old Germany which is conquered today the German Social Democrats have opposed. Longing draws us toward the new Germany which is arising today."